

HELMSLEY  
Rural District Council

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THE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
FOR THE  
RURAL DISTRICT  
OF HELMSLEY

FOR THE  
Year ending 31st December, 1945



# To the Helmsley Rural District Council

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Mr. Chairman, My Lord and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health for the Combined District, for the year ending December 31st, 1945.

## SECTION A.

### Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area of Helmsley Union	....	67,705 Acres
Resident population in 1945	....	6,000
Dwellings, structurally seperate	....	1,194
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	....	£74
Full Rateable Value	....	£18,823

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

We still suffer from the effects of the war. This is especially noticed in an agricultural community such as ours. Farmers complain of a shortage of male labour, which is to a certain extent supplemented by the employment of Foreign Soldiers, as well as a small number of our own men demobilised from the Army. The lack of female assistance is not greatly different from the conditions prevailing during the war years, and Housewives in the farms and villages are overworked. After the efforts necessary to bring the war to a successful issue there is no doubt that a certain amount of war weariness is still apparent in our people. This is reflected in an increased tendency to suffer from the milder forms of illness, and a longer period of convalescence from more serious Disease. The control of food, with clothing difficult to obtain, tends to lower the vitality of the whole population. But the Public Health remains at a comparatively high level.

With the exception of Measles and Whooping-Cough we had very little Epidemic Disease. Both these ailments of childhood seem to recur at regular intervals; and prevailed almost throughout the year. They were mostly of a mild character, but extremely infectious.



## VITAL STATISTICS

Live Births— Total 83.

		Male	Felale
Legitimate	....	39	32
Illegitimate	....	7	5

Rate per 1,000 Estimated Resident Population 13.8

Still Births— None.

Death of Infants under 1 year of age— Total 8.

Legitimate	....	5	2
Illegitimate	....	1	0

All Infants per 1,000 Live Births— 95.2

Deaths—All Causes— 61.

Rate per 1,000 Estimated Resident Population 10.2

Deaths from Cancer, all ages	....	13
do from Whooping Cough	....	0
do from Measles	....	1
do from Diarrhoea	....	0

**SECTION B.**

## AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

These are as before. The Ryedale Ambulances, of which we have the call upon two for conveying patients to Hospitals & Infirmaries, have been prompt to attend upon all occasions, and have been of great assistance throughout the year.

Infectious Diseases were taken to the Fever Hospital at Northallerton when notified.

## NURSING IN THE HOME.

All Home Nursing is now carried out by the District Nurses who have been assiduous in their duties on all occasions, day and night. The Helmsley & District Nurses, managed by an active Committee, reported to the Nursing Association of the District, 2,825 visits. These were made up as follows :

General Nursing	1,618 visits
Midwifery	239
Maternity	275
Anti-Natal	164
Infant Health	529

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Total 2,825

There is a Children's Welfare Centre which meets every month, attended by the Nurses & the local Doctors. The work done has been of great value, and is much appreciated by nursing mothers.

### **SECTION C.**

The Sanitation of the District is on the whole fairly satisfactory. As during the war years shortage of labour has been a cause of some difficulty. The Helmsley and Ampleforth Sewerage Works have been held up; but work will be undertaken as soon as labour is available. There has been no serious nuisance in any part of the area. All open sewers and septic tanks are regularly inspected & are in working order.

### **SECTION D.**

#### **HOUSING.**

New Housing schemes are in operation, and serious overcrowding is no longer a source of complaint, and the Public Health has been upheld.

### **SECTION E.**

#### **MILK SUPPLY.**

Milk is still rationed throughout the Area. The schools have a daily supply for the children. The allowance to Expectant and Nursing Mothers is sufficient, and in some of the schools a mid-day meal is supplied. It is hoped to extend this assistance to all the schools in the District, as soon as suitable arrangements can be carried out. Where available this will be of great value in the maintenance of the health of School Children. In outlying parts of the area, where children have to travel often considerable distances to school, motor conveyances are now employed. During severe weather this arrangement is of great benefit to the children. There were fewer cases of colds and catarrhal ailments during the winter months.

#### **NUTRITION.**

Food substitutes were supplied in sufficient quantity to supplement the restricted supply of nourishment. The consumption of fresh fruit is by no means ample, and fruit juices are used instead. While such an attempt to supply the necessary vitamins to maintain health is of considerable value it can never replace the natural product. There is now adequate supplies of vegetables in the area.

## MEAT & OTHER FOODS.

Meat is rationed, but the amount is by no means generous. Tinned foods can never wholly make up for fresh meat. The public are willing to put up with the rations, and I can find no serious deterioration of Health in the present circumstances.

## WATER SUPPLY.

The supply of good water for domestic purposes is of the utmost value. Owing to one cause and another, chiefly on account of military requirements, water in the area has sometimes run short. The habits of the public have altered greatly in recent years, and there is an increased demand for Water. All over the country its use has enormously advanced, and Sanitary Authorities find a greater difficulty in securing an adequate supply free from contamination.

The Pyethorn Supply was not always sufficient, and Old Byland, as usual, is often short of water. It is expected that New Schemes will be undertaken as soon as labour to carry out the work is available. Meantime every effort is being made to conserve Water by all possible means.

All the Water in use in the Area is of excellent quality, if sometimes scarce.

## SECTION F.

### PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

Measles and Whooping Cough were very prevalent throughout the District, especially during the early months of the year. As already stated the Cases were of a mild character.

#### NOTIFIABLE CASES DURING 1945.

	Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Scarlet Fever	8	4	0
Whooping Cough	32	0	0
Measles	447	0	1
Meningitis	1	1	1
Diphtheria	1	1	1
Erysipelas	2	0	0
Pneumonia	13	0	2



## RIVERS &amp; STREAMS.

Rivers and Streams have been kept free from rubbish. No pollution was discovered in any part of the District. The contamination of the Boro Beck has been put right, and the pipe from the Public Convenience is now running free.

## SCHOOLS.

All the schools in the Area were regularly visited and inspected. Sanitation was found satisfactory in every case. Defects in the structure of the schools were not serious, and closets and drains were in good working order.

## CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS.

Rievaulx School was closed from January 8th to January 22nd on account of an outbreak of Measles.

Helmsley C. of E. School (Girls) was closed from January 29th to February 19th for a similar reason.

Ampleforth C. of E. School closed from 29th January to 19th February for Measles.

Ampleforth R. C. School closed from 19th February to March 5th for Measles.

Hawnby C. of E. School was closed from February 23rd to March 5th for Measles,

Helmsley Wesleyan School closed from 28th February to March 5th for Measles.

Ampleforth R. C. School was again closed from March 5th to March 12th as the children were returning slowly, and it was decided to give them a longer period for convalescence.

Snilesworth School was closed from April 9th to April 23rd on account of Measles and severe colds. On the 23rd the teacher reported that a great proportion of the children still remained away from school, as Measles was prevalent in the cottages among infants under school age. On consultation with her it was considered advisable to extend the closure to 30th April.

## CAUSES OF DEATHS IN HELMSLEY R.D., 1945.

		Male	Female
Tuberculosis—Respiratory	....	1	1
Other Forms of Tuberculosis	....	1	0
Influenza	....	1	0
Measles	....	0	1

		Male	Female
Cancer	....	5	8
Intracranial Vascular Lesions	....	3	4
Heart Disease	....	12	4
Other Circulatory Disease	....	1	0
Pneumonia	....	1	1
Other Respiratory Disease	....	0	1
Digestive Disease	....	0	1
Nephritis	....	0	2
Premature Birth	....	2	0
Suicide	....	1	0
Road Traffic Accident	....	1	0
Malformation at Birth (Congenital)		1	1
Other Violent Causes	....	2	0
All Other Causes	....	4	1
		<hr/> 36	<hr/> 25

### WEATHER REPORT.

The weather statistics were again supplied by Mr Williams, Headmaster of Helmsley C. of E. Boys School, whose courtesy I have pleasure in acknowledging.

#### RAINFALL.

The total Rainfall for the year ending December 31st 1945 was 29.99 inches. Last year it amounted to 34.13 inches, and in 1943 to 28.81 inches.

The heaviest monthly fall was in January, when there was recorded 5.10 inches; the next wettest month was August with a rainfall of 3.31 inches.

The driest month was March with .58 inch of rain. November was also a dry month with only .86 inch, so also were July with a recorded depth of 1.84 and September 1.68 inch respectively.

Snow fell on 15 days in January. It was a bitterly cold month with heavy snow on the 29th & this was followed by a thaw and heavy rain next day. There were two days with snow in February.

March was comparatively dry with an average temperature. There was hoar-frost on 8 days of the month.

The last three days of April had snow showers; it was rather cold with some frost.

The last three months of 1945 were relatively mild, and no snow fell.

Fog was seen at the end of January & about the middle of February and in October and December. But the fog was much below the average.



## TEMPERATURE.

Frost was recorded on 7 months of the year—this is about the normal for this part of the country. On February 24th the temperature fell to 14 degrees of frost—18 degrees F, February was our coldest month. The opening months of the year were very cold and stormy. May was dry with much thunder.

## WARM.

Again July and August were our warmest months. On July 14th the temperature rose to 83 degrees F.; and on August 3rd it stood at 86 degrees—the warmest day of the year. From August 24th to the end of the month it was warm and dry, with no rain.

As in the previous year the summer was rather dull with a cool June and a wet August. On the whole it was a year of alternating warm and cool weather; except for the opening months. Public Health was well maintained, except for the usual colds and catarrhs in January and February.

## WINDS.

There was much boisterous weather in January and February. Westerly winds prevailed in the opening months of the year, with easterly and northerly winds towards the end of January and the beginning of February. From the middle of February the wind came mostly from the West and North-West. It was frankly West on February 24th, the coldest day of the year.

Compared with 1944, the weather was less variable. Much Rheumatism was complained of during the winter. There were few cases of Influenza; but it was a bad year for persons with weak chests, and Bronchitis was a frequent ailment.

## CONCLUSION.

There was comparatively little ill-health in the Area during 1945. The Death Rate of 10.2 per thousand compares favourably with the rate of 13.8 per thousand for the whole country. We had fewer cases of the common cold and catarrhal illness during the winter and early spring. The epidemics of Measles and Whooping Cough, prevalent during the greater part of the year, fortunately ran a mild course. Cancer is the sinister blot in our statistics. Apparently this Disease is quite independent of sanitation, or the general health of the population. Although research

all over the world is concerned with discovering its cause, the mortality remains formidable. Early recognition is the only means of ameliorating its deadly menace by surgical interference before it advances beyond the incipient stages. The public have been warned to apply for medical advice as early as possible. Unfortunately this advice is often ignored or neglected until all hope of permanent recovery is beyond surgical skill.

I have pleasure in again expressing my thanks to your Council and its Officers for their courtesy and assistance in carrying out my duties, and to my Medical Colleagues for support and consideration on all occasions.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

ALEXANDER C. BLAIR, M.D.

# Annual Report of the Council's Sanitary Inspector and Building Surveyor.

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Council Offices,  
Helmsley, York.

To the Chairman and Members of the  
Helmsley Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, my Lord and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my first Annual Report on the work of the Public Health Department of your Council. As I commenced my duties on the 1st May, 1945, this Report will cover the period 1st May, 1945 to 31st December, 1945.

The total number of visits made during this period for all purposes were 757, and are summarised as follows :—

## GENERAL SANITATION—

Water Supplies	....	216
Drainage	....	68
Factories	....	4
Bakehouses	....	1
Public Conveniences	....	16
Refuse Collection	....	16
Refuse Disposal	....	21
Rats and Mice Destruction	....	7
Cesspools	....	1
Helmsley & Oswaldkirk Sewerage Works		20
Gilling and Ampleforth	do	6
Pockley and Harome	do	17
Salvage	....	25
Miscellaneous	....	112

## HOUSING—

Number of Houses inspected	....	16
Number of Visits to Houses	....	19
Miscellaneous (Council House visits)		127

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES—

Enquiries	....	9
Visits re Disinfection	....	8



## MEAT &amp; FOOD INSPECTION—

Visits to Slaughterhouses	....	4
„ Butchers	....	6
„ Grocers	....	2
„ Cowsheds	....	10
„ Food Preparing Premises		26
		—
		757
Complaints investigated	....	21

## HOUSING.

At the present time there are 103 Council Houses in the Area, and during the year the following defects were remedied .—

Roofs repairs	...	44
Floors repaired	....	7
Ceilings repaired	....	1
Waste Pipes renewed or repaired		7
Windows repaired	....	1
Defective Rain Water Pipes repaired		1
Door Fastenings renewed	....	6
Yards repaired or renewed	....	1
Houses treated for dry rot	....	1
Coppers renewed	....	1
Coppers repaired	....	2
Walls repaired	....	2
Houses treated for dampness	....	4
Plasterwork repaired	....	4
Repairs to Hot-water Systems		4
W.C's provided	....	4
Water Supplies repaired in houses		7
New Boilers provided	....	2
Electrical repairs	....	9

During the year it was found necessary to carry out external redecorations to the Council Houses. This work was undertaken by direct labour and a painter was engaged, and the materials were provided by the Council. Very gratifying results were obtained and the average cost per house was approximately £3/10/-.

As the Council Houses, with the exception of those in the Parish of Helmsley, are drained into septic tanks, a great deal of work in cleaning these tanks out was necessary.

## MILK SUPPLY.

There are 182 cowkeepers, producers & wholesale and retail traders of Milk in the Area. During the year several new cowkeepers were registered.

During the year, only 10 visits of inspection were made to cowsheds in the Area due to shortage of staff. This, difficulty will be removed in the near future with the appointment of an additional Sanitary Inspector, who will also devote his time to the carrying out of the Rural Housing Survey for this District.

## **Water Supplies**

During the year 216 visits were made to Water Supplies in the Area.

Difficulty in maintaining regular supplies were experienced at Cawton, Gilling, Ampleforth, Sproxton, and on the Piethorne System.

At Cawton the position is that consumption has increased beyond the delivery capacity of the hydraulic rams with the result that the village is often without a supply.

At Ampleforth the difficulty was attributed chiefly to the Military Camp which was occupied at the critical time. The military did, however, co-operate fully in the effort to cut down consumption.

It is evident however that certain works will have to be carried out in order to ensure regular supplies to the College and township of Ampleforth.

The Sproxton supply gave cause for considerable anxiety during September and October when the high level farms were without a supply of water for several days. Here again steps will have to be taken to augment this supply.

The Piethorne Scheme administered by a Joint Committee of the Helmsley and Kirbymoorside Rural District Councils, and under my supervision, serves the villages of Pockley, Beadlam, Harome, Nawton and Wombleton and all the farms in this locality

Difficulty has been experienced during the year due to shortages which affect the high level consumers chiefly. It is considered the trouble is due to a bad burst and steps are being taken to trace it.

It is certain that the supply is not sufficient to meet the demand and therefore the supply will have to be augmented in the near future.

The increased demands due to increased farm usage and the ever increasing provision of sanitation will affect all supplies chiefly those mentioned here and tend to prove the insufficiency of the supplies.

With the exception of the Ampleforth, Sproxton, Cawton, Gilling, and the Piethorne system the remainder of the townships in the area were well served.

### PUBLIC CLEANSING.

The collection of house refuse is undertaken in every parish in the area on a fortnightly collection basis. Motor transport of the low loading type is used and all refuse is disposed of by the controlled Tip method. Refuse is brought in to Helmsley for disposal at the tip there on account of it being central.

Other tips used occasionally are at Ampleforth and Gilling, and these are in a fairly satisfactory condition. The Helmsley refuse tip is not in a sanitary condition and great difficulty is being experienced in exercising proper control due to shortage of labour and lack of suitable material for sealing purposes. The tip is also badly infested with rats and in an effort to keep the infestation under control regular poisoning with Zinc phosphide etc, has had to be resorted to. Very excellent results have been obtained.

During the year some 1440 tons of house refuse were collected and disposed of in the area. This work is steadily increasing as additional houses are included.

### RURAL HOUSING SURVEY.

Owing to shortage of staff in the Department it has not been found possible to commence with this survey but it is hoped that in the near future and with the appointment of an additional Sanitary Inspector a start will be made. It will then be possible to press on with the work with speed and regain much of the ground lost by the Council in this connection.

This survey will bring to light the need for great improvements in the area in connection with housing, water supply, drainage and conversion of privies.



## SEWERAGE &amp; DRAINAGE.

At the present time the townships of Helmsley and Oswaldkirk are provided with proper sewage disposal systems. The Oswaldkirk works have proved satisfactory during the year. The Helmsley works are not capable of dealing with the present flow of sewage and are therefore overloaded. In addition the works require modernising and the adoption of rotary filtration instead of land irrigation would be a considerable improvement.

The remaining townships in the area are in dire need of proper sewage disposal systems including sewers. The lack of these facilities has greatly retarded the work of conversion from the old insanitary privy to the water closet. In most cases these villages are served by means of unsatisfactory sewers, some in the shape of open ditches which discharge into convenient streams.

Trouble has been experienced during the year in cleansing these ditches and keeping them in working order. The joint scheme serving Beadlam, Nawton, Wombledon and Harome under the management of the joint committee of the Helmsley & Kirbymoorside Rural District Councils is in most urgent need of consideration and action and the large village of Ampleforth should also receive attention with regard to the provision of a sewage disposal system.

During the year 111 visits were made to drainage and sewage works in the area.

## SUMMARY OF WORK.

Septic Tanks cleansed	11
Choked Drains cleared	12
Choked Sewers cleared	1
Sludge Beds cleared	9
Open Sewers cleared	2

## SALVAGE.

This work has been well maintained during the year and has been greatly assisted by the splendid co-operation of the local members of the W.V.S.

Collections are made throughout the Area once each month, with the exception of Helmsley, where a house-to-house collection takes place each fortnight. A specially constructed trailer is used for this work and is drawn by the Council's Motor Wagon.

During the year the Salvage collected and disposed of was as set out below.—

	Tons	Cwts	Qrs
Waste Paper & Cardboard	12	16	1
Bones	....	7	2
Metal	1	0	0
Textiles	....	15	0
Rubber	....	5	0

The sales of salved materials during the year realised £92/19/0.

The quantity of materials salved has however fallen during the year due no doubt to the lack of public interest following the sessation of hostilities.

### PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

There exists one set of Public Conveniences in the area situate at Helmsley and accommodation for both sexes is provided.

These public conveniences are not of sufficient size to cope with the seasonal bus traffic from other areas, which deposit passengers for a break when enroute to the sea side.

### INSPECTION OF MEAT & OTHER FOODS.

Owing to the Governments Scheme of Centralised Slaughtering no livestock is slaughtered for human consumption in this area at the present time. Supplies of dressed meat are drawn from outside the area.

Regular visits are made to butchers shops in the area and general supervision is maintained. In all cases excellent conditions were found to prevail.

Much extra work under this heading has been necessitated owing to the Military Camps and their N.A.A.F.I. establishments in the area.

During the year the following articles of food were condemned as unfit for human consumption.

Pork Luncheon Meat	9 lbs
Butter	6 lbs
Bacon	15 lbs
Corned Beef	7 lbs
Tins of Milk	72
Sugar	28 lbs
Small Cakes	52 dz.

Barley	10 lbs
Oatmeal	29 lbs
Eggs	38 dz.
Dried Egg Powder	4 lbs
Soup Powder	16½ lbs
Sausage	27 lbs
Potatoes	7 lbs
Margarine	1 lb
Tins of Beans	5
Tins of Salmon	1
Beetroot (1 gl. Jars)	4
Apricots	11 lbs
Crabs	4

#### RATS & MICE DESTRUCTION.

The usual procedure has been followed during the year in this connection.

Poisons have been issued and advice given. Disinfestation work on known infestations such as Refuse Tips and Sewage Works has been carried out by the Council workmen.

This work will have to be considerably advanced if the request of the Ministry of Food Rodent Control Division is to be met, and can best be dealt with by the appointment of a Rodent Operator for the district.

#### CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, my Lord and Gentlemen, I would like to express my appreciation for the splendid support given to me during the year and for the cordial consideration of all matters under my control.

I should also like to express my sincere thanks for the cooperation and valuable assistance rendered to me by the Clerk to the Council, H. L. Bates, Esq., and the Medical Officer of Health Dr. A. T. Blair.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

F. W. STONEY, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

Senior Sanitary Inspector.







